



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. LIBRARY

~ A collaboration between the City of San José and San José State University

News Release

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The King's Dream Team Tops the Guinness World Record For Non-Stop Reading Aloud

SAN JOSE, Calif. — At 11:20 p.m. on Friday evening, a weary yet jubilant six-member team representing the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library succeeded in surpassing the current, though unofficial, world record for non-stop reading aloud. Buoyed by their success, the team vowed to continue on until noon on Saturday, ultimately reading a total of 74 hours as part of the library's August grand opening festivities.

The members of the "King's Dream Team" began reading on Wed., Aug. 13, at 10 a.m. on the second floor of the King Library; their goal being to surpass the official Guinness World Record of 53 hours and 2 minutes. Undaunted by the discovery that a team of 16-year-old German school girls may have set a new record in May of 61 hours and 16 minutes, the team forged ahead. "Nobody really minds," said alternate reader Nathaniel Yates, "because the girls were doing it to raise money for charity and we always planned to go well beyond the record-breaking point anyway." Yates is an SJSU mechanical engineering student and a student assistant in the King Library.

During their long read-aloud marathon, the team has been reading from more than 100 books, short stories, plays, essays and poetry, beginning with the famous "I Have A Dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. read by SJSU student and KSJS campus radio news director, Ramon Navarro Johnson.

The rules for a Guinness challenge are strict and require that all members of the team, including the coaches, two official witnesses, and other support people not leave the reading area for the entire time of

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the marathon. They are allowed five-minute comfort breaks periodically, but otherwise must read, eat, and sleep in the public setting. No more than six individuals are permitted to read during the marathon, each for a maximum of three hours at a time. No pause in reading can be longer than 30 seconds.

The King's Dream Team is comprised of 12 individuals affiliated with San José State University or the City of San Jose. The six readers are:

- Mike Adams, chair of the SJSU Department of Television, Radio, Film and Theatre
- Ramon Navarro Johnson, SJSU student and news director of KSJS, the university's radio station
- Paul Kauppila, reference and instruction librarian, King Library
- Bridget Kowalczyk, literacy competence specialist, King Library
- Sandy Seronick, a youth services library assistant, King Library
- Annalisa Wilson, King Library page and student at Santa Clara University

Completing the team are: team managers Christy Aguirre, a collection development library clerk in the King Library, and Marilyn Seybold, a reference librarian in the King Library.

Appropriately enough, team leader Bridget Kowalczyk was reading Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hatches an Egg* when the historic moment arrived. With team members gathering around with glasses raised for a toast, Kowalczyk was well aware that the critical point was approaching. "My only thought," she said, "was to maintain my concentration and not jeopardize our goal to surpass the record by a healthy margin." And so she did, continuing on to read Dr. Seuss' *Horton Hears a Who* and three other books before ending her shift at 11:56 p.m.

The current international record for continuous reading aloud, according to Guinness, was set by a six-member team at the Cultural Centre of Rovereto in Trento, Italy. Those readers began on November 29, 2002, and finished 53 hours and 2 minutes later on December 2, 2002.

Both a videotape and an audiotape of the reading done by the King's Dream Team will be submitted to the Guinness World Records in England for verification of the achievement.

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